

Pre-Scoping Activities for the Honey Badger Project

The planning area is important to a diverse number of user groups with different values, perspectives, and interests. Early in the project development process, we initiated open and ongoing communication with individuals and organizations interested in or affected by our actions.

The intent of this early communication was to

- increase public awareness, interest, and engagement
- identify preliminary issues
- discuss development of the proposed action
- seek ideas for resolving specific concerns related to recreation uses

Interested members of the public were contacted through news releases, emails, telephone calls, and social media. Discussions occurred on a regular basis as part of ongoing relationships with the Panhandle Forest Collaborative and IPNF Trails Working Group. District Ranger Dan Scaife introduced the project to the Coeur d'Alene Tribe at the Government to Government consultation meeting in Plummer, Idaho in June 2017, and continued to update the Tribe throughout the pre-scoping process.

Project team members attended the meetings of a variety of organizations for the purpose of introducing or providing an update on the Honey Badger project area and proposal, including but not limited to:

- 4-C Natural Resources Committee
- Kootenai County Natural Resource Advisory Board
- Kootenai County Office of Emergency Management
- Idaho Department of Fish and Game
- Kootenai County Board of Commissioners
- Hayden Lake Watershed Improvement District
- Coeur d'Alene, Office of the Mayor
- Coeur d'Alene Chamber of Commerce

Multiple field trips to the area were conducted.

- On July 28, 2017, District Ranger Dan Scaife, team members, and other IPNF staff conducted a field trip to the area. Participants included representatives of the Panhandle Forest Collaborative subgroup, congressional staffers, and Geoff Harvey (Hayden Lake Watershed Improvement District).
- A June 26, 2019, field trip had 15 attendees (in addition to Forest Service staff). The group included representatives from Panhandle Forest Collaborative, American Forest Resource Council, Vaagen Bros. Lumber, Stimson Lumber, Boise Cascade, Idaho Department of Lands, The Lands Council, National Forest Foundation, and the offices of Senator Crapo, Senator Risch, and Congressman Fulcher, as well as individuals.
- On September 6, 2019, Ranger Scaife visited the area with Geoff Harvey, of the Hayden Lake Watershed Improvement District.

On August 27-29, 2019, open-house meetings were held in Athol, Hayden, and Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, to share information and answer questions about the Honey Badger project. The public was notified of the open house meetings through a news release distributed via email to newspaper, television, radio, and online media throughout Idaho and parts of eastern Washington and western Montana (79 recipients); an article ran in the Coeur d'Alene Press on August 23. The news release information was also posted to social media (USFS IPNF FaceBook/Twitter), and shared with visitors at the IPNF booth at the North Idaho State Fair (project info cards and the August briefing paper were also available). In addition, invitations were extended through telephone calls, emails, and meetings with interested individuals and local organizations in the weeks preceding the open house meetings.

District Ranger Dan Scaife and Deputy Forest Supervisor Kim Pierson welcomed attendees as they arrived.

Attendees were provided with two handouts – one with information about the meeting format and how they could become involved, and the August project briefing paper. Members of the project team were available to provide information and answer questions about forest health, fire and fuels, recreation, scenery, wildlife, hydrology and fisheries, and the project process and timeline. Displays of maps, photos, and other information helped describe current conditions in the project area. The project StoryMap was displayed at the Athol and Hayden meetings (but not at the Coeur d’Alene meeting, due to limited space).

A total of approximately 80 people attended the three meetings (Athol – 18, Hayden – 35, Coeur d’Alene – 23; some attendees did not sign in).

The overwhelming majority of discussions were very positive. Many people said they understood the need to improve forest health through vegetation management, as well as the need for fuel reduction and protection from catastrophic wildfire. One individual was supportive of the need for prescribed burning, but had strong concerns with impacts of smoke in the Hayden Lake basin, stating logging residue should be chipped rather than burned.

The predominant topic of interest was related to recreation, including management and maintenance of existing trails, potential new trail opportunities, and user conflicts. Some were concerned with water quality in the watershed, including effects of recreation/trail use and shooting along Hayden Creek Road.

In regard to potential effects to scenery, some people supported the need for forest management and felt that activities could be designed to reduce effects to scenery. Some were concerned with the appearance of harvested areas adjacent to private lands. It was also suggested that harvest could help open some viewpoints from trails in the area. There were few questions about wildlife habitat in the area, and those were primarily related to the effect on public motorized access.

Open communication will continue throughout the process, with formal opportunities to comment during scoping, review of the environmental assessment, and the administrative review (objection) period.

Stakeholders Involved in the Pre-Scoping Process

American Forest Resource Council	Kootenai County Office of Emergency Management
Avista Corp.	National Forest Foundation
Boise Cascade	Office of Congressman Fulcher
Coeur d’Alene Tribe	Office of Senator Risch
Four County (4-C) Natural Resource Committee	Office of Senator Crapo
Hayden Lake Watershed Association	Panhandle Backcountry Horseman
Hayden Lake Watershed Improvement District	Panhandle Forest Collaborative
Idaho Department of Fish and Game	Panhandle Trail Riders Association
Idaho Department of Lands	Stimson Lumber
Idaho Forest Group	The Lands Council
Kootenai County Board of Commissioners	Trails Working Group
Kootenai County Natural Resource Advisory Board	Vaagen Bros. Lumber



August 27, 2019 open house meeting at the Athol Community Center, Athol, Idaho.



August 28, 2019 open house meeting at Hayden Lake City Hall, Hayden, Idaho.



August 29, 2019 open house meeting at Fire Station 3, Coeur d'Alene, Idaho.